

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-3 (canceled);

4 (currently amended). A fishing bait apparatus ~~as described in claim 3, wherein~~ comprising:

a container having side, upper and lower walls, said upper wall having a plurality of holes being disposed therethrough and being spaced generally parallel above said bottom wall thus forming a water compartment between said upper and lower walls, said container also including air holes being disposed through a portion of said side wall above said upper wall of said container;

a lid assembly including a lid member being hingedly attached to said container and also including lid support members for supporting said lid member in an open position, said lid assembly further includes including brackets being attached to an underside of said lid member and having slots therein, and also ~~includes~~ including eyelets being attached to said inner side of said side wall, and further ~~includes~~ including a catch mechanism being securely attached to said side wall near a top edge thereof and having a housing with an opening therein and also having a spring-loaded catch being biasedly disposed through said side wall of said container and in said housing, and also ~~includes~~ including a latch being attached to said underside of said lid member and being removably received and engaged by said catch in said housing for latching said lid member upon ~~said open top of~~ said container;

a handle assembly including a handle being pivotally attached to said container;

bait storage members being disposed in said container and upon said upper wall; and

a floatation member being disposed in said container for floating said container upside down.

5 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 4, wherein said lid support members are strings each having a first end portion which is connected to a respective said bracket, and also being strung through a respective said eyelet.

6 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein said lid assembly also includes a battery-operated light-emitting member being attached to said underside of said lid member.

7 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein said handle assembly includes a pair of disc-shaped handle retainers being attached to an outer side of said side wall of said container and having axially-extended bores disposed therein.

Claim 8 (canceled);

9 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein said bait storage members includes a plurality of partitions being disposed upon said upper wall in said container, and also includes a plurality of gate support members being attached to said partitions, and further includes gate members being slidably supported by said gate support members for forming bait storage compartments upon said upper wall in said container, and also includes tab members being attached to said gate members for retaining said gate members in open positions.

10 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein said bait storage members include cylindrical members being disposed side-by side and having openings being disposed through said walls thereof, and also include gates support members being attached to said cylindrical members, and further include gate members being

supported by said gate support members and being closeable over said openings of said cylindrical members.

11 (original). The fishing bait apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein said bait storage members also include boxes being removably disposed upon said upper wall of said container for storing worms, and further include covers being removably disposed upon said boxes and having venting holes being disposed therethrough, and also include tubular air inlets being disposed in side walls of said boxes for allowing air to vent into said boxes.